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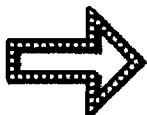
01/23/2006 03:10 PM

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Subject Fw: The Park Record: EPA prepares to finish in
Prospector

----- Forwarded by Jennifer Chergo/OCP/R8/USEPA/US on 01/23/2006 02:44 PM -----



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Subject The Park Record: EPA prepares to finish in Prospector

EPA prepares to finish in Prospector

The agency's work in neighborhood brought a 'stigma' stretching since the '80s

Jay Hamburger
Park Record

The Environmental Protection Agency is preparing to finish its work in Prospector, the agency said, a pivotal announcement that, it seems, could free the neighborhood from what is seen as an environmental stigma stretching from the 1980s.

The agency staffer assigned to Park City, Denver-based Peggy Churchill, said the EPA is ready to complete a process known as 'archiving,' an administrative procedure that, once done, will be filed in an EPA database indicating that the work is finished.

"They should be excited. They've helped to develop one of the most highly regarded institutional-control programs in the country," Churchill said in an

interview.

At one time, the EPA considered putting Prospector onto the notorious Superfund list of environmental-cleanup sites. Prospector, like other spots in Park City, suffered from leftover mining-era contaminated dirt. The neighborhood was listed in a pre-Superfund database in 1985 but Prospector avoided a Superfund designation.

City Hall created a so-called 'soils ordinance' that regulated Prospector in 1988, a reaction to the EPA investigation. Under the ordinance, property owners were required to cover their yards with six inches of topsoil if the lead content of the land exceeded 1,000 parts per million. The process is known as 'capping.'

Ron Ivie, City Hall's chief building official and a key figure in the long-running discussions with the EPA, said there are currently about 25 properties that must be capped. Under the ordinance, a little less than 300 properties plus other lands have been capped and the government created what is known as a 'special-improvement district' to help fund the capping.

He remains proud of the ordinance's effectiveness, saying that it influenced the EPA as it handled other sites in the U.S.

"I think we did affect national policy on this project," Ivie said.

He acknowledged that City Hall is required to continue enforcing the soils ordinance once the EPA finishes.

The EPA's involvement in Park City has sometimes been contentious, especially during the first round of the agency's investigation, in the 1980s.

Longtime Parkites remember the investigators conducting tests to determine if people had too much lead in their blood. Ivie said the Centers for Disease Control, though, found only two people with elevated lead levels and each of them were exposed to lead outside of their properties.

In the late 1990s, the EPA revisited its investigation, which has been ongoing since. In that period, the EPA chose to investigate the entire Silver Creek watershed, not Prospector exclusively, stretching from Empire Canyon to Richardson Flats.

The relationship between the EPA, City Hall and regular Parkites has been more cordial in recent years than it was in the 1980s, however, and the EPA was praised for its new approach.

Mayor Dana Williams cautioned that the pending archiving is important but that Parkites must continue to cap their properties if necessary.

"It doesn't mean that it's over in terms of people complying with the ordinance," said Williams, a Prospector resident for about 15 years.

He said Park City earned the EPA decision to archive the neighborhood and especially credited Ivie, saying that the chief building official deserves an award.

He noted a City Hall program in the last two years that has offered financial assistance to people capping their property with topsoil and also credited Parkites who paid for their properties to be capped. Williams said it could cost as much as \$15,000 recently for properties to be capped.

"I could not be more thrilled. There's been, historically, (a) stigma," the mayor said.